

## ParShaT *TeRuMaH* One Pager Series

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[**Background:** We continue to bring controversies between Rashi and either academic scholars or other Jewish commentaries. Today we bring a 3-way controversy: Rashi, Ibn Ezra, and Ramban.]

**Rashi #1 Biblical Text: Ex25-08** [God speaking to Jewish people]  
*Let them make [simple command tense] Me a Temple, & I will dwell amongst you*

Like all I am showing [present tense] you

i) *The frame of the Temple, and*

ii) *The form of its utensils*

Thus you should do [future command tense]

**Rashi Text:** [Rashi makes several points]

#A) The underlined word *like* always links the previous and future texts:  
*Make me a Temple...like what I am showing you.*

#B) The indentations, i),ii) show that this command applies to both the Temple frame and the utensil forms.

#C) Last week we covered Rashi's approach to the difference between the conjugated past tense e.g. (*amar*) which Rashi translates as *God had said* (and hence prior to the events under discussion) and the past tense as indicated by the future conjugated tense with a conversive *vav* (*Vayomer Hashem*) which Rashi translates as *God said* [at that time]. We also saw that Ramban disagreed with Rashi. Finally citing the Ramban and modern academic research we showed two approaches to understanding the difference between *amar* and *vayomer*.

In this week's parshah we have *ve-asu* [conversive *vav* + past conjugation] and *vecayn ta'asu* [future conjugation] which because of the context as command Rashi interprets as a *simple command* [do this now] and a *future command* [do this in the future]. Hence the Rashi comment: "Whenever (in the future) you build a broken utensil or a Temple in Israel the vessels should

follow the constructions mentioned in this biblical narrative."

#D) Rashi [after amending 1 word in the manuscript] points out that the verse could have avoided the *like-thus* style and simply said: *You should do all I am showing you the frame of the Temple and the utensil forms*. If the Bible had written that it would refer to the narrative following the current text, to the construction in the wilderness of the Desert Temple. By using a *like-thus* style with simple commands, present tenses, and future commands the text indicates future requirements.

**Ibn Ezra:** Ibn Ezra disagrees with Rashi but his argument is weak. He says the first *let them make* refers back to the Temple while the terminal *thus you shall do* refers to the Temple utensils (not the future). But that is weak, since as can be seen by the indented i) and ii) the first *let them make* applies to utensils.

**Ramban:** First, we notice the language by which Ramban appears to disagree with Rashi. Ramban frequently disagrees by stating *these are the words of Rashi but I say...* In this case however, Ramban more modestly says *I don't know why he said it*. Thus Ramban did sense that something deep was bothering Rashi.

**There is no need:** Simon the great Ibn Ezra academic scholar beautifully summarizes the method that Ibn Ezra disagrees with an interpretation that appears *midrashic* (homiletic). Ibn Ezra will state his mantra *ayn tzorech, there is no need*. Cohen in his book *Three approaches to Metaphor* points out how the Ramban borrows Ibn Ezra's mantra here in criticizing Rashi.

**Ramban's alternate explanation:** Recall first that Ramban (as we showed last week) was unaware of Rashi's approach (*vav+past* versus *future*). Ramban explains the double declaration of *making*: *Let them make...like all I have shown they should make* as simply *doubling language for emphasis*. But a simple computer search shows that the *like...thus they did* is a rule of style, not a doubling for emphasis (See Gn06-22, 41-13, 44-10, Ex07-06, 12-28, 12-50,27-08, 39-32, 42:43. Even see Ex07-10 with an order reversal *thus they did ...like* ).

**Manuscript analysis:** My opinion is that the Rashi (#D) in positing an alternate text posited *the text could have said do all I am showing you*; if so it would only

refer to the present construction. A copyist seeing *do all* (*taasu col*) changed the *lamed* to a *nun* (*tasu cayn*). Had the Ramban seen the original text he would be ok.